

**SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS
FOR NATURAL DISASTERS AND
OVERSEAS PEACEKEEPING EF-
FORTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998**

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I might state for the RECORD, it sort of proves my point. I yielded time on the appropriations bill for 5 minutes, and here we are 2 hours later. I do hope that Members will understand if we are not very cooperative any further on this bill. Further, however, I might say to the Senator from Georgia, who was yielded specific time so he could have time comparable to that used by the Senators from Massachusetts and Connecticut—and I understand he only had 5 minutes of that 25, 26 minutes—he is not included in the prohibition against having some time on this bill when I manage it, as far as I am concerned.

Madam President, I have a series of amendments. I would like to proceed with them.

I do have one of them that is cleared already. It is an amendment to the pending supplemental appropriations bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2067

(Purpose: To prohibit the Department of the Army from moving forward with civilian personnel reductions and the offer of Voluntary Separations Incentive Pay (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) benefits at all Army Test Ranges until such time as the Congress has the opportunity to consider the merits of such actions during the Fiscal Year 1999 Appropriations process; and to require that the VERA and VSIP benefits being currently offered will continue to be available if necessary)

Mr. STEVENS. I send the amendment to the desk on behalf of the two Senators from New Mexico, Senators DOMENICI and BINGAMAN, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Alaska [Mr. STEVENS], for Mr. DOMENICI, for himself, and Mr. BINGAMAN, proposes an amendment numbered 2067.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 15, after line 21, insert:

SEC. . Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Department of the Army is hereby prohibited from moving forward with civilian personnel reductions at all Army Test Ranges resulting from proposed reductions in their fiscal year 1999 budget, until such time as the Congress has the opportunity to consider the merits of such action during the fiscal year 1999 defense appropriations process. Where civilian personnel are concerned, the Army is required to offer such Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority benefits as are currently being offered, should such benefits be necessary at a future date.

Mr. DOMENICI. Madam President, my amendment does not increase the

cost of the emergency supplemental in any way.

What it does is it freezes in place the current posture of civilian personnel authorizations at all Army Test Ranges, including White Sands Missile Range until such time as the Congress, and this Committee, has an opportunity to consider the merits of the President's fiscal year 1999 budget as it relates to this installation.

It is a very simple, straight forward amendment, and it is necessary for me to proceed in this way at this time because the Department of the Army has chosen to circumvent the congressional oversight process. Let me tell you how:

Because of budgetary constraints, the Department of the Army made a distributional decision that would reduce White Sands Missile Range's WSMR's, overall RDT&E budget by approximately \$17 million in fiscal year 1999. As a result, WSMR was asked to plan for a reduction of as many as 550 full-time civilian positions.

Subsequently, in late December 1997, the Army agreed to provide approximately \$11 million to WSMR for the purpose of offering Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, VERA, and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay, VSIP, benefits. This ameliorated some of the civilian personnel reductions that are scheduled to take place in fiscal year 1999. With the VERA and VSIP benefits, the Army's plan for WSMR is to reduce approximately 350 civilian personnel.

I do not believe it is prudent for the Army to be reducing civilian personnel authorizations at WSMR until such time as the Congress has an opportunity to consider the merits of such actions during the fiscal year 1999 defense appropriations process. Unfortunately, the Army has directed WSMR to open the window of opportunity for retirement benefits from now until March 31, 1998.

This action effectively precludes the Congress from exercising any oversight responsibility of the Department of Defense decisions in this regard. Once civilian personnel at WSMR elect to take the benefits, those civilian personnel positions are essentially eliminated.

In addition, if the Army does not find enough personnel who are willing to take the benefits, a Reduction In Force, RIF, will have to occur and its timing will be such that the Congress will have little or no ability to address these issues.

Finally, what should cause great concern to every member who is interested in Congressional oversight, the Army is using fiscal year 1998 funds to implement reductions that are planned to occur in fiscal year 1999. This circumvents the Congressional oversight process.

Again, my amendment prohibits the Department of the Army from continuing to move forward with any civilian personnel reductions at WSMR until such time as the Congress has the opportunity to consider the merits of

such action during the fiscal year 1999 Defense Appropriations process. In addition, the bill language requires the Department of the Army to offer such VERA and VSIP benefits as are currently being offered should such benefits be necessary at a future date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the amendment is agreed to.

The amendment (No. 2067) was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. I move to reconsider the vote by which the amendment was agreed to, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, the Senator from Georgia is still here, and we are waiting for the beginning of the time on the McCain amendment. I yield him 5 minutes at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Alaska.

**EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

Mr. COVERDELL. Madam President, earlier this afternoon, the Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from Connecticut were debating their opposition to the education savings account that we have been struggling with since last July. The essence of their argument is that it does not amount to much, that there would only be \$37 of interest saved on a family that had a child in private school and only \$7 if the family had a child in public school.

You cannot have it both ways. If it is so insignificant, why have we spent the better part of a year filibustering it? Why would the President say, "I will veto the entire tax relief package if that provision is in there"? Something about that argument does not fit.

The other thing I will say about those arguments is that they talk about the tax—that figure is a tax that wouldn't have been paid by that family—but they forget to mention the amount of principal that is in the account earning interest which is forgiven. In the case of \$37, that means that family has saved over \$1,000 in order to earn the \$37 tax relief. What it says to me is how little incentive it takes to make Americans go out and save.

Madam President, \$1,000 is 50 percent greater than the average savings of American families. The average American family today saves \$1,900. That is their savings. And by this modest forgiveness, we take it up to \$3,000. So we are using a very modest amount of tax relief to cause Americans to save billions of dollars. This tax relief proposal would generate in the first 5 years \$5 billion worth of savings and over a 10-year period over \$10 billion worth of savings to aid and support students in public and private education.

The third point I will make is this: The other side and the White House celebrated extensively the passage of a \$500 education savings account, one-fourth the size of this savings account, and that was, as I said, celebrated on the White House lawn: "This is a great idea." Well, if \$500 worth of the ability to save is such a great idea, how come if we expand it up to \$2,000 it is suddenly an insignificant idea? That becomes a little hard to follow, too.

You know, again, I go back, Madam President. The President of the United States said, "I will veto the entire tax relief to every American citizen in the United States if that savings account for American families stays in the tax relief bill." So we had to take it out. We are not going to have every American family denied tax relief over this idea. We think it is a good idea, but we were not going to do that. So we brought it back as freestanding legislation and, as we have said here this afternoon, have been filibustered every step of the way.

The other point I would like to make to my colleague from Massachusetts and my colleague from Connecticut, who has left the floor, is that this proposal is now a much larger proposal. And the proposal represents the input of Senator BREAUX of Louisiana, Senator GRAHAM of Florida, and Senator MOYNIHAN of New York. In other words, we have made this a very broad-based, broad policy, with representatives from both sides of the aisle. This is no longer a Republican proposal; this is a Senate proposal. The chief cosponsor of this legislation is Senator TORRICELLI of New Jersey. He sits over there—principal cosponsor.

By listening to this thrashing back and forth this afternoon, you would think this was a gold-gilded Republican, highly partisan proposition. The proposal on the floor—if we can ever get to it—the amount of tax relief we represented, 80 percent of it comes from the Democrats' ideas. They are good ideas. State prepaid tuition plans; they are not going to tax students when they get the money to go to college; or expanding employer-provided educational assistance.

I yield for just a moment. I say to the Senator from Alaska, if he wants to call back his time, I will be glad to facilitate his needs.

Mr. STEVENS. Madam President, the Senator from Georgia is very kind. But I prefer to let him continue until the time comes to lay down the next amendment. It should be before his time expires, I assure him.

Mr. COVERDELL. I thank the Senator from Alaska.

Expanded employer-provided educational assistance. That is a tax relief to employers who help their employees expand their education. And the Joint Tax Committee says 1 million American workers will benefit from that.

Senator GRAHAM from Florida has a school construction provision which makes financing to build public schools

expanded and will lead to 500 new schools across the Nation.

The Senator from Arizona has arrived. The chairman of the Appropriations Committee needs to proceed with his business. I thank him for his cordial assistance here, and I yield the floor.

Mr. STEVENS. I am sure the Senator still has some time coming on his 26 minutes, and we certainly will account for that before this bill is over.

Mr. COVERDELL. Very good.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield the floor to the Senator from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS AND OVERSEAS PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 2063

(Purpose: To eliminate unrelated, wasteful, and unnecessary spending items from the bill)

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I send amendment No. 2063 to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Arizona [Mr. MCCAIN], for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. GRAMS, proposes amendment numbered 2063.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

On page 16, strike beginning with line 6 through page 18, line 5.

On page 19, strike beginning with line 2 through line 12.

On page 19, strike beginning with line 24 through page 20, line 2.

On page 26, strike beginning with line 7 through line 11.

On page 35, strike beginning with line 10 through page 38, line 18.

On page 40, strike beginning with line 1 through line 25.

On page 43, strike beginning with line 8 through line 13.

On page 4, strike beginning with line 13 through 10 page 5, line 3.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I want to begin by expressing my appreciation to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, my dear friend and a person who is responsible for the timely and important provision of this bill to the Senate. It is in the nature of the defense and disaster supplemental appropriations bill.

There are some very vital needs that have to be met in this bill for the good of the American people and for our defense. And, as always, I am very appreciative of the outstanding leadership exercised by the chairman of the committee.

As I have done for many years, Mr. President, however, I would like to

point out that there are provisions of this bill which I find wasteful and unnecessary and should not be included in any appropriations bill, much less one which is a defense and disaster supplemental appropriations.

This amendment that I have at the desk would eliminate \$78 million for unrelated wasteful and unnecessary spending that was added in committee.

I want to clarify that the amendment would not strike the \$50 million added for disaster relief for Georgia. These funds were added to the bill well before the disastrous tornadoes struck last Friday in Georgia and North Carolina and Tennessee. And I believe that in light of the clear need for relief of those hit by the devastating tornadoes last week, these funds should remain in the bill. I trust that the conferees will ensure that these added funds are shared among those who suffered losses of family, friends, and property in all three affected States.

Now, let us turn to the items that would be eliminated by this amendment:

\$4.48 million in unrequested emergency funds for maple producers, to replace taps and tubing damaged by ice storms in the Northeast;

\$33 million in emergency funds for unrequested levee and waterway repairs in Alabama and Mississippi;

\$4 million in unrequested funds for development and demonstration of dielectric wall accelerator technology for remote explosive detonation, radiography, and fusion applications.

I want to repeat that one, Mr. President.

\$4 million in unrequested funds for development and demonstration of dielectric wall accelerator technology for remote explosive detonation, radiography, and fusion applications;

Language providing a special exemption from the law to allow the Secretary of Energy to pay \$80,000 in retraining costs for workers at the Pinellas Plant site;

\$2 million and language that requires payments to counties to replace funds counties expected to receive from timber road construction projects which will be canceled due to the proposed moratorium on such projects;

\$7.5 million as the first increment of a \$26.5 million project to repair and rehabilitate the Capitol Dome, and \$20 million for security upgrades around the Capitol complex;

\$6.9 million for transportation planning and research and an investment analysis in the area of transit planning and research.

None of these items, Mr. President, is related to military operations in Bosnia and the Persian Gulf. None of these items were requested as emergency disaster relief requirements, and most bear no relation to disaster relief at all. The bottom line is that none of them belongs in this emergency appropriations bill.

Let me briefly just talk about a few of the add-ons in greater detail.